

# Tomorrow Vaasa is green

## The Greens' Communal Election Program 2021 for Vaasa

The Greens of the Vaasa region are ambitious about developing Vaasa during the next council term. In our program, we have put together our view of the most important things we are fighting for. Our absolute goals are to make Vaasa carbon-neutral in the 2020s, to safeguard biodiversity, to ensure equal education, to reduce poverty, to guarantee sustainable housing and a stable city economy, and to expand the participation of Vaasa residents in decision-making.

### 1. Sustainable Vaasa is carbon neutral in the 2020s

The climate crisis is being fought in the municipalities. In Vaasa, the goal is to be carbon neutral in the 2020s. Concrete decisions will have to be taken in the forthcoming term of the municipal council to make this happen. The Greens of the Vaasa region want emission-free solutions in transport and energy production. Climate work creates new jobs, raises the city's image, and builds a comfortable living environment for its residents. Making low-emission choices should be an easy part of everyday life. Biodiversity is under threat and needs protection. Species extinction requires solutions also in cities, and this can be influenced in planning.

#### 1.1 Towards zero-emission traffic

- Initiate a public transport development program, invest in genuinely smooth public transport, and reduce transport emissions. Make walking, cycling, and the use of public transport as easy and hassle-free as possible and encourage the choice of carbon-neutral means of transport.
- Develop public transport for business travel and leisure.
- Increase the frequency of bus services, including in the evenings, during holidays, and on weekends
- Develop the online public transport information further so it will be even easier to use. Introduce the possibility to pay a single ticket with contactless payment cards on our busses.
- Enable smooth commuting by rail.
- Develop car sharing and the electric car charging network
- Invest in year-round cycling. A high-quality bicycle traffic network will be built and winter care will also be planned from the point of view of cyclists.

#### 1.2 Vaasa on the way to carbon neutrality and a circular economy

- Create a roadmap for reducing emissions in various industries and co-operate with companies and organizations to reduce emissions in Vaasa.
- Improve energy efficiency in municipal properties and explore the possibilities of the buildings' own energy production.
- Condense the community structure by keeping green areas accessible to all inhabitants.

- Switch all public buildings away from polluting heat production sources (coal, oil, peat).
- Facilitate and encourage the use of renewable energy sources. The opportunities of consumption elasticities are also to be acknowledged.
- <sup>Locate</sup> textile recycling points around the city.
- Obligate the city group's properties to acquire plastic and cardboard collection points.

### 1.3 Vaasa takes care of biodiversity and animals

- Protect important carbon sinks and make more of them as part of urban planning.
- Make biodiversity a priority in urban and green space planning. Protect valuable forest areas.
- Encourage landscaping by city urban planning, for example green roofs and walls.
- Transform low-use green areas and wastelands into natural meadows. Flowering meadows bring joy to insects and people.
- Strengthen on-call veterinary care in the Vaasa region to meet the needs of city residents.
- Recognize the important work of Koiratarha Kulkuri and Cat House regionally in animal protection.

## 2. Equal, bilingual, and international education as part of the city's attractiveness

When social and health issues are transferred to the consortium of municipalities in 2022, education will remain the most important field for decisions for single municipalities. We Greens believe that equal and high-quality education from early childhood education to secondary education creates the best support for life. Schools need to have healthy and safe learning environments. The Corona virus has been a severe ordeal for children, young people, and teaching staff. It is now important to provide support for learning and prevent problems before they pile up.

- Ensure a sufficient number of early childhood education places at reasonable distances to support the smooth everyday life of families with children.
- The placement of child care for shift working parents in different areas will be clarified.
- In early childhood education, the current percentage of service voucher day care centers is maintained. The quality of both private and public service is monitored.
- Ensure that schoolchildren's morning and afternoon activity times fit into the schedule of working parents.
- Ensure healthy learning spaces, take care of indoor air problems in a timely manner, and ensure up-to-date information.
- Stick to small teaching groups.
- Ensure adequate availability of school attendance assistants, school social workers, and school psychologists.
- Create channels to tell about bullying and to get in contact with the school's social worker through social media. Promote mental health skills.
- Commitment to the region's advantage: language-bath activities and further strengthening it.

- Provide access to English-language early childhood education and basic education.
- Increase the accessibility of university studies already at secondary level.
- Familiarise children with science already in primary school.
- Layoffs and bans on use of substitute workforce are educational cuts. In Vaasa, education should be valued more.
- Don't compromise on the education and planning days for early childhood education and school staff.
- Add vegetarian days. All schools and kindergartens always offer a high-quality vegetarian and vegan food option. Preference is given to what is produced nearby and the possibilities of contracts with local producers will be explored.
- Build innovative and multi-purpose facilities: an area's kindergarten can later be transformed into a school, or old people's homes and kindergartens can be partly housed in the same facilities.
- Plan school and kindergarten environments to be peaceful and safe.
- Ensure efficient and smooth public transport to schools.
- Develop lifelong learning so that adults have good study opportunities and immigrants a good integration path.
- Develop city bilingualism by supporting the knowledge of both domestic languages by employees and citizens.

### **3. We fight poverty and promote prosperity**

Social and health services will be transferred to the Ostrobothnian Consortium of Welfare Municipalities (“hyky”) in 2022. The Consortium of Municipalities also serves the people of Vaasa. The Greens aim to ensure that the consortium of municipalities provides high quality services to all citizens, keeps customer fees reasonable, and ensures that services are available within a reasonable time. There may come times in everyone’s life when their own resources are not enough. Green policy always aims to reduce poverty.

- Hard and valuable work is being done in child protection. Ensure a minimum staff size per client in child protection and all social work to curb the workload.
- Consult child protection clients to improve services.
- Extensive collaborative networks will be established with schools, school psychologists and social workers, libraries, organizations, and sports clubs.
- Provide low threshold support to families on a through family center activities before problems pile up.
- Develop cooperation with organizations providing food aid in Vaasa, for example by guaranteeing social work in food queues.
- Establish a housing counseling service.
- Adequate comprehensive and low-threshold mental health and substance abuse services, such as for young people in Klaara, are guaranteed. The queues for services are to be cut down.
- Take care of the elderly so that they can live well and healthy in their later years.
- Recognise the valuable work of the third sector and keep it involved in the transition to the welfare consortium.
- Prepare for the care debt caused by the Corona virus in all areas of social and health services.

### **4. Living in Vaasa must feel being home**

Vaasa must be developed equally, so that there are several alternative forms of housing: owner-occupied and rented apartments, detached houses, terraced houses, and apartment buildings. There is currently a shortage of small flats near the city center, so they must be built.

- Develop right-of-occupancy housing (asumisoikeus) and plan new forms of housing.
- Plan diverse residential areas with different forms of housing and building plots.
- Build communal living environments that encourage encounters between people.
- Develop Pikipruukki so that the city's rental apartments are of high quality and attractive.
- Encourage accessibility through urban planning and building permits.
- Curb high housing costs with adequate housing production and land supply.
- Place the Right-of-occupancy housing and various housing options for senior residents in new residential areas.

## **5. Culture, education, and exercise as part of the well-being of the city's inhabitants**

Each euro put into exercise and culture pays for itself. Exercise and culture increase the well-being of inhabitants, help generate a creative economy, and enliven the city. Vaasa should be developed towards a centre for diverse cultural offerings, where a good framework will be created for the work of art and culture professionals. Grassroots cultural activities that produce active urbanism should be enabled. Exercise belongs to all age and population groups. It is important to design an urban environment that promotes exercise and to ensure that different sports have space in sports venues in different areas.

- Support the hobbies of local residents of all ages. Provide diverse recreational opportunities in cooperation with clubs and associations.
- Allow every child a hobby.
- There must be good public transport connections to recreational opportunities.
- The Kaiku card will be made a permanent option and will be extended to sports services as well.
- Build and repair accessible and barrier-free facilities, for example the Cultural Barracks.
- The area around Lake Pukinjärvi will be restored as an outdoor area for the city's inhabitants.
- The main library will be developed towards a common living room and meeting place for the city's inhabitants. Gerby will get its own library.
- Clearly mark recreation areas and create bus lines to Öjberget and Pilvilampi.
- Develop the Öjberget area as a versatile place for hobbies and sports.
- In winter, an artificial ice rink will be built in the downtown area.
- New basketball and volleyball courts will be built to allow for easily accessible exercise.
- Explore the possibility of establishing and marking new paddling routes.
- The availability of new training rooms for bands operating in the area will be investigated.
- Illuminate outdoor areas to increase attractiveness and safety.

- Enable a vibrant street culture.

## **6. Sustainable municipal finances are green**

The economy of the city of Vaasa has been reasonably good in recent years, but it has been burdened by the so-called cumulative deficit. According to current estimates, the deficit will be covered in 2022. The Greens believe that the city must rebalance its economy, while maintaining the quality of basic services.

- Make realistic budgets where expenditure is estimated according to preliminary data. Stop deliberate under-budgeting.
- Prevent problems before they become too expensive for both repair and care debt.
- All investments must take into account the reduction of carbon emissions or carbon storage.
- Balance between repair debt and new investment. Repair debt in building, the condition of the streets, the water supply, and the sewers, must be taken care of.
- Excellent operating conditions for entrepreneurship for both large battery factories and small entrepreneurs will be created in the city.
- Create a vibrant and attractive space in the city center and sub-urban centers by investing in amenities such as green areas, terraces, and a vibrant urban culture.
- Identify diversity as an asset in different city-owned businesses.
- Further develop links between universities and companies in the region.
- Explore opportunities to provide affordable space for small businesses, artists, and associations.
- Investigate the development of Öjberget and the costs of the ski centre for the city.
- Respond to the shortage of experts in companies by investing in attracting and retaining international experts in the city.

## **7. Open decision-making and inclusion**

The people of Vaasa are active city inhabitants, whose involvement in municipal decision-making must be strengthened. Democracy must not just be about leaving the ballot in the ballot box, but about developing the city together. The Greens of Vaasa want to invite and encourage everyone to develop Vaasa.

- Various actors are consulted in a wide range of decisions and a dialogue is maintained between the city and the associations.
- Always recruit to significant positions publicly.
- Support important associations by awarding grants in accordance with the criteria for an immediate period of three years to facilitate the planning of activities.
- Extend the right of youth councils to attend and speak at the city's decision making institutions
- Continue and expand the experiment of inclusive budgeting.